

# NEWS

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## **First American Indian Youth Literature Award winners announced, honored at JCLC**

CHICAGO - The American Indian Library Association (AILA), an affiliate of the American Library Association (ALA), is pleased to announce the first recipients of its American Indian Youth Literature Award. This new literary award was created as a way to identify and honor the very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians. Books selected to receive the award present Native Americans in the fullness of their humanity in the present and past contexts.

The award is presented in each of three categories—picture book, middle school, and young adult—and each winner receives \$500 and a commemorative plaque, which will be presented during the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color's (JCLC) Children's Luncheon program in Dallas on October 13 at noon.

"We are thrilled to have this opportunity to honor authors and illustrators who best portray Native American culture for young readers," said Victor Schill, co-chair, AILA American Indian Youth Literature Award committee. "The rich literary heritage of this nation includes the oral and printed stories of its indigenous peoples. American Indian literature always has been and continues to be an integral part of our literary tapestry."

"Beaver Steals Fire: A Salish Coyote Story," by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, illustrated by Sam Sandoval, and published by the University of Nebraska Press is the winner for the picture book category. Accompanied by rich watercolor illustrations, the text

(More)

**Recipients of first American Indian Youth Literature Award**

relates a culturally vital tale from the Salish people of Montana about the significance of the gift of fire and how it should be respected.

Louise Erdrich is the winner of the middle-school award for “The Birchbark House,” published by Hyperion Books for Children. Setting her book in the middle 19th century, Erdrich paints a detailed portrait of Ojibwa life through the experiences of 7-year-old Omakayas who lives on the Island of the Golden Breasted Woodpecker on Lake Superior. “The Birchbark House” was Erdrich’s first novel for young readers, and the first book she has illustrated. She is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwa and lives with her two daughters in Minnesota.

The young adult award is “Hidden Roots,” written by Joseph Bruchac and published by Scholastic Press. The book is set within the historical framework of the Vermont Eugenicis Program, a Native American sterilization program in the 1930s, and tells the story of the haunting effects of this shameful and tragic deed on one of the Abenaki families victimized by it. Author of more than 70 books for adults and children, Bruchac is of Abenaki ancestry and is a nationally recognized professional storyteller living in Greenfield Center, New York.

To register to attend the presentation of the American Indian Youth Literature Award, please visit the JCLC Web site at [www.ala.org/jclc](http://www.ala.org/jclc). Advance registration for the JCLC ends September 8, 2006.

In the near future an American Indian Youth Literature Award free downloadable bookmark and brochure will be made available on the AILA Web site at [www.nativeculturelinks.com/aila.html](http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/aila.html).

Members of the American Indian Youth Literature Award are: Naomi Caldwell, co-chair, GSLIS, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I.; Victor L. Schill, co-chair, Harris County Public Library, Houston; Carlene Engstrom, D’Arcy McNickle Library, Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, Mont.; and Gabriella Kaye, Mashantucket, Pequot Museum & Research Center, Mashantucket, Conn.